

# HAMPTON VA

## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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## Rental inspection on City Council's agenda is part of 'Safe and Clean' campaign

**Sept. 6, 2013** – Hampton City Council will consider Wednesday a proposal for inspections of rental homes related to the city's "Clean and Safe" campaign to protect the public health, safety and welfare of occupants and strengthen the city's neighborhoods.

Seven areas of the city are proposed for rental inspections, to ensure that residents' living conditions are safe and sanitary. City inspectors can already look at the exterior of buildings to ensure they follow codes; the new proposal is that they also inspect the interior of the buildings. The neighborhoods were selected by overlaying data that showed crime statistics, exterior property maintenance violations, percentage of rental dwellings, and age of homes. Some neighborhood associations specifically asked to be included.

The proposal is to create 7 rental inspection districts: Holly Homes and Fordham; South Phoebus; Sussex; Old Hampton; Shell Road Corridor and South Wythe; Old Northampton and Langley; and Hampton Club and Magruder Heights. (Map at <http://hampton.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3176>)

Other cities in Hampton Roads, including Williamsburg, Portsmouth, Norfolk and Virginia Beach have rental inspection programs. Hampton had a similar program in two neighborhoods in 2005. During that year, city records show, there were 139 units inspected. Forty-six "disqualifying violations" were found.

The goal of the program, according to the material submitted to Council is: to ensure that all occupants in these districts are afforded safe, decent and sanitary living conditions and to increase the value of Hampton's housing stock. Owners who want to rent their property will pay a fee of \$50 per unit; dwellings that pass inspection will be certified for four years.

Other items on the agenda include:

- An amendment to the Community Plan to offer strategies for reducing the number of publicly-assisted housing units in the city. The goal is to prevent concentrations of poverty that create substandard conditions for residents and draw crime to the areas. That effort was endorsed by the Planning Commission on Thursday. See story at <http://hampton.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=342>

Two business proposals that were delayed from last month's meeting are back:

- A funeral home proposed for 978 Big Bethel Road. The original proposal also included a crematorium, which drew considerable opposition at the public hearing. The crematorium has been removed from the proposal.
- A boat bed and breakfast proposed for the marina at 424 E. Queen Street.

The evening City Council meeting begins at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of City Hall, 22 Lincoln St. The business meeting is preceded by a public comment period at 6 p.m. and an afternoon work session at 1 p.m. The afternoon session includes a report from a citizen committee that was asked to examine the method of electing School Board members; and a briefing on the rental inspection program. All will be broadcast live on the City Channel, 47 on Cox and 23 on Verizon Fios, as well as streamed at <http://www.hampton.gov/citycouncil>. That site also contains more details on the agenda.

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